

# Cable Mill Sustainable Energy Project



National Park Service

North Carolina, Tennessee

## Project Description

The Superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Park) is announcing a 15-day public scoping period to solicit comments on a proposed sustainable energy project. The National Park Service is proposing a solar power system to support the electrical power needs of the Cable Mill area in Cades Cove. This project would reduce the site's usage of traditional fossil fuels and provide opportunities for park visitors to learn about solar power and clean energy sources.

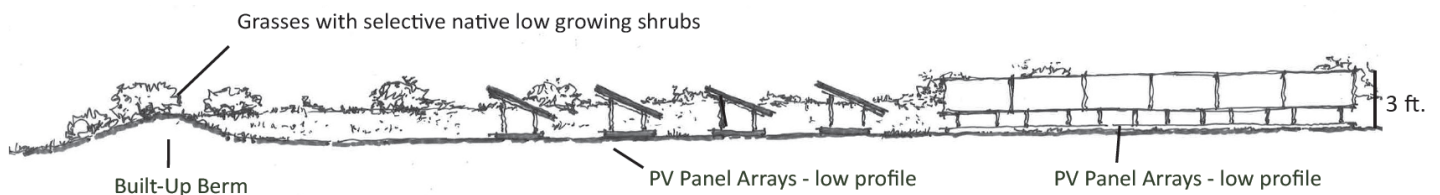
Cades Cove receives approximately 1.8 million visitors per year. Many of these visitors stop at the Cable Mill area to visit the exhibit of historic structures assembled there. This area also provides access to a small visitor center, bookstore, and comfort station with flush toilets and potable water. Given its remote location at the west end of Cades Cove, the Cable Mill area is off the commercial power grid and all power must be generated on site. The existing power system consists of a propane-fueled generator and battery system, which is costly and labor-intensive to operate. The existing system also generates air pollutant emissions and noise.







*The proposed location for the solar array is southeast of the Cable Mill comfort station in an open field. This location maximizes solar exposure and is close to areas requiring power, but is separated from the Cable Mill historic exhibits. The array would consist of 80 panels, occupy a 40- by 65-foot area, and would be integrated with an existing on-site battery bank, which will store excess energy generated by the panels for use when the sun is not shining.*



*Several proposed design features are intended to minimize visual intrusions to the historic setting and cultural landscape of Cades Cove. The array's low-profile design (3 feet high), coupled with the site's natural slope, selective grading, and use of tall grasses and native shrubs or trees would help the array blend into the landscape.*



*A low-profile design (3 feet high), similar to the one pictured above, is proposed to minimize visual intrusions.*



As a participant in the Climate Friendly Parks program, Great Smoky Mountains National Park belongs to a network of parks nationwide that are putting climate-friendly behavior at the forefront of sustainability planning. By conducting a carbon emissions inventory, setting an emission reduction goal, developing an action plan, and committing to educate park staff, visitors, and community members about sustainability, the park provides a model for climate-friendly behavior within the National Park Service. The proposed Cable Mill solar project would support this sustainability initiative and produce the following benefits:

- Reduce the Park's use of propane by approximately 4,050 gallons per year.
- Reduce carbon emissions by about 23 metric tons annually.
- Reduce maintenance and fuel costs by \$14,400 annually.
- Contribute to cumulative benefits of existing solar projects at Clingmans Dome and Sugarlands Visitors Center, and a proposed solar project at Mt. Sterling.

## Join the Conversation

The Park has initiated National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and other compliance processes to evaluate potential adverse and beneficial impacts of the proposed project on the natural, cultural, and human environment. As an integral part of the compliance processes, the National Park Service is asking for your input. Public scoping is an early step in the process, where the public is asked to identify opportunities and concerns to help the Park focus its analysis on important issues. The information below describes how you can get involved in scoping and provide input.

### How to Comment—Public Scoping Comment Period Open through March 20, 2017



**Submit comments electronically**  
*(preferred method)*

**National Park Service**  
**Planning, Environment, and Public Comment**  
**Website:** <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grsm>  
**Follow the link titled:**  
"Cable Mill Sustainable Energy Project"



**Submit by mail**

**Superintendent**  
**Great Smoky Mountains National Park**  
**107 Park Headquarters Road**  
**Gatlinburg, Tennessee 37738**

Please enter your comments online or have them postmarked by March 20, 2017 to ensure consideration by the National Park Service in its decision making process. If approved by the Superintendent and funding obtained, the solar system could be made operational by summer 2018.